

WIMBLEDON

FLARE-UP

# Edwards sent off, two booked in 'friendly'

By **STUART EARP** Wycombe Wanderers 2, Wimbledon 1

**REFEREE** Alan Turvey booked two players and sent off another when Wednesday night's pre-season "friendly" between Wycombe Wanderers and Wimbledon erupted in the last few minutes at Loakes Park. Off went Billy Edwards while Kevin Tilley and Wycombe's George Cleary were cautioned.

The trouble all started when Mr. Turvey awarded a penalty to Wycombe in the 85th minute. Wimbledon players protested for over a minute before Ian Pearson scored from the spot. Three minutes later Tilley, who had been warned previously, was booked for a foul on John Priestley. From the free kick Alan Phillips scored to put Wanderers 2-1 up.

A minute later Cleary, who played for Cambridge United last season and was making his debut for the Blues, ran through the middle with Billy Edwards. There was some jostling and Edwards eventually swung a punch (which missed) at

Cleary. The referee consulted his linesman, booked Cleary who unwisely went over to join the consultation, and then booked and sent off Edwards.

That last incident brought an unsavoury and unnecessary finale to what had been a keen and competitive warm up to the season. Unfortunately it became too warm.

Although Mr. Turvey might be accused of taking too severe a line, it must be stated that players had been warned at various stages of the game. Both teams knew he is a strict official but seemed to rely on the fact that this was a friendly and that punishment would be waived.

This isn't the first trouble Wimbledon have run into over the last few years. They possess several physical players in their side and trouble of this sort is never far away. Perhaps they will eventually learn that you never win in the long run if you break the rules.

## GREAT PITY

The great pity of it all is that this Wimbledon team are good enough to beat any non-league sides around — and a good many league clubs too, as they showed two years ago in the F.A. Cup. They have all the skill, control and experience. Only their temperament lets them down.

The flare-up in the last five minutes tended to overshadow what had been an interesting contest previously. Once again, manager Ted Powell gave his

new players a run out and introduced Cleary as a new striker. Howard Kennedy and John Maskell came in for their first game while John Priestley went up front to allow Gavin Fraser a full 90 minutes in midfield. England Youth central defender Rod Best was not used during the game.

Wanderers were soon glad to see Maskell back in action between the posts and he made some notable saves throughout the match to demonstrate just why his experience is so invaluable.

It soon became apparent that the tempo in this game would be totally different to Saturday's friendly against Derby. The pace was much quicker, so quick in fact that Wimbledon's Dave Bassett was heard to comment at one stage: "Stop trying to play it at 200 m.p.h."

The increase in speed brought more mistakes as players struggled to find time to control and use the ball. But when moves were strung together, Wanderers looked a lot more dangerous than against Derby. Billy Holmes, who exemplifies Wimbledon's talent, forced a good save from Maskell after 20 minutes while Fraser, who had a quieter game compared with Saturday, almost gave keeper Dickie Guy a shock with an angled drive at the other end.

After 38 minutes Wimbledon went ahead — from the penalty spot. Holmes beat Fraser on the edge of the box and was about to cross when Fraser felled him from

behind. Holmes sent Maskell the wrong way with the penalty.

Wanderers made three half-time substitutions and for the first 15 minutes of the new half played some excellent attacking football. They were more positive, more direct and more accurate. Fraser and Phillips got in good strikes while Guy reacted quickly to Priestley's 54th minute drive following a corner.

Unfortunately this spell of Wycombe pressure didn't last long and the Blues were again indebted to Maskell for two fine saves from Connell and John Leslie. The second came after a great move when Holmes' backheel sent Connell away. His unselfish cross left Leslie with only Maskell to beat and the defence totally naked. But John came out brilliantly to block the shot.

Maskell robbed Leslie of another good chance in the 83rd minute and two minutes later, the Blues were awarded their penalty. West went up for a high ball with Pearson and clearly put his arm across the Wycombe centre forward. The referee felt the offence warranted a penalty and after much argument, Pearson drove the ball past Guy for Wanderers' first goal of the season.

Tilley was booked soon afterwards and then Wycombe snatched a dramatic lead a minute from the end. It came from the free kick given away by Tilley. Paul Birdseye flighted the ball into the box where Priestley rose well to head on: Alan

Phillips, up for the set piece, was first to react and slid the ball home at the far post.

The sending off incident followed soon afterwards and brought the game to a controversial close.

Of the Wycombe newcomers, Fraser again promised but struggled a little after the interval while Pearson looked sharp. He has a tendency to keep possession a little too long at times but nevertheless looks a useful asset. Alan Davies and Glen Swaby had only a half apiece while Jock Mackenzie, a more mature and stronger player, looked much improved. It's a shame he will be returning to college soon.

Cleary, who played with Davies at Dunstable and also spent a time with Bedford, is an experienced front man, while Priestley did a brave job as striker. Mick Sorenson had a difficult time against three good forwards but stuck to his task well.

**WYCOMBE:** J. Maskell, M. Sorenson, K. Mead, A. Phillips, P. Birdseye, A. Davies (sub H. Kennedy 45 mins), G. Fraser, G. Swaby (sub J. Mackenzie 45 mins), A. Horsman (sub G. Cleary 45 mins), I. Pearson, J. Priestley. Sub R. Best (not used).

**WIMBLEDON:** R. Guy, K. Tilley, L. Markham (sub J. Eames 75 mins), G. Bryant, W. Edwards, L. Alden, D. Bassett, I. Cooke (sub West 75 mins), W. Holmes, R. Connell (sub A. Morris 84 mins), J. Leslie. Sub S. Rice (not used).

**Referee:** A. Turvey.

**Half-time 0-1. Goalscorers,** Wycombe — Pearson pen (85), Phillips (89), Wimbledon — Holmes pen (38).

**Attendance:** 580.